



Why and How

The Lord's Day
Should be Observed.

As answered by a...
Toronto Bible Class

“Remember the Sabbath
Day to
keep it **holy**”

Exod. 20 : 8.

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*AS ANSWERED
BY A TORONTO BIBLE CLASS*



"Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it **holy.**"

Exod. 20:8.

The same Bible Class which dealt with the question, "Is the Bible a Myth?" thought it not inopportune to take up for consideration the question, "Why and How the Lord's Day Should be Observed." The following answers are given, as the result of such enquiry. The members of the class thought it well that the answers should be collated and printed, and accordingly this is done.

Toronto, June, 1896.

WHY AND HOW THE LORD'S DAY SHOULD BE OBSERVED.

WHY?

1.—It is God's great command, not intended for the Jews alone, as it was at the Creation given to all the world.

2.—Because He who is above all and whose day it is commanded it.

3.—He enforced His command by Himself resting the seventh period of time.

4.—He that is holy hath commanded it. If we love Him, we will endeavor to keep His commandments.

5.—He gave His special blessing to those who sanctified this day. Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.

6.—He never abrogated this great command, nor sought in any way to limit it.

7.—It was one of the great fundamental principles on which He created and peopled the world, and His creatures have no right to abrogate this condition.

8.—It is one of the three institutions left when all else seemed lost by Adam's fall. These Sundays, "threaded together on time's string," unite the Garden of Eden with the City of the New Jerusalem.

9.—As the command was given with absolute distinctness and without limitation, in order to the repeal of such a law, the repeal must be found expressed with equal clearness as the command, and this is absolutely wanting. The command therefore still stands.

10.—This day of rest was intended as a type of the eternal rest—as a reminder to the soul—as an opportunity for preparation—as a season to recall man from the all-absorbing things of time—as a breathing spell to enable the soul to look up and learn the thoughts and language of heaven ; and therefore was intended by the beneficent Creator for all His creatures in all parts of His world and at all periods of its history.

11.—As the rainbow was given to us as a sign or type, so this day is given as God's witness of the greater day of rest in the home that He is preparing for His people. (Hebrews iv. 9-11.) "There remaineth therefore a rest (or keeping of the Sabbath) to the people of God." This is God's royal gift to mankind. It is a type and a preparation. This is the world's Magna Charta. This is the day on which it is to be realized that a man has a soul as well as a body, and that it needs food, and that God has given, not only the natural nourishment of the soul, but also the time or occasion for feeding it.

12.—As a Christian land we are bound to take heed to the commands of our King, and if we do not do so we are guilty of treason, and forfeit the privileges of citizenship.

13.—The opinions of man do not affect the truth, and the truth is, no matter what man may say or think, that the day belongs to God, and He wants man to keep it holy.

14.—When those in authority, in so-called Christian lands, have interfered with the setting apart of this seventh portion of time, as a century ago in France, misery, rebellion, and bloodshed have followed ; and where the sanctity of the day has been lightly esteemed there has followed a deterioration in morals and manly character, as in Spain, Italy, etc.

In this connection the following remarkable statement recently appeared in the Paris newspaper "LaPresse": "England owes much of her energy and character to the religious keeping of Sunday. Why cannot France follow her, as the Sabbath was made for all men, and we need its blessing?"

15.—It is a universal need in order to the full growth of the complete man and woman. All admit

the need of physical and mental exercise and the need for setting apart times for such exercise ; of how much more need is there to set apart regularly a time for the exercise of the ever-living soul !

16.—Because natural laws which govern the physical universe say with a voice of authority that rest is absolutely essential to perfect health.

17.—This command being universal, when those from other lands come in to sojourn with us and form part of the community they are bound to conform to the foundation rules on which such commonwealth builds, and which are considered by its founders to be necessary for its continued existence. They must submit to the rule, "*Salus populi, lex suprema.*"

18.—Those who care not for the command of God, and have no regard for the soul, must bear in mind that physically and mentally man stands in need of this day. The body and the mind are tired out. The continued strain from Sunday morning to Saturday night is too great. The wave of strength each day fails a little. The powers decline, and there is needed, besides the night's rest, the rest of the seventh day to enable the wearied body to recuperate and to supplement the nightly rest, which is insufficient.

(a) A physician in New York State has stated recently that, in two years, he treated 2,500 cases from one store in the city, the direct result of nervous strain arising from the long hours of work.

(b) A railway man recently said, referring to his employment for the seven days in the week : "*Our work is a brutalizing one.*"

Writers on this subject without number have enforced the need of this day of rest.

(c) Sir William Blackstone says : "*The observance of one day in seven is of admirable service to a State, considered merely as a civil institution.*"

(d) Emerson, no apologist for Christianity, says of Sunday : "*It is the core of our civilization.*"

(e) The Rev. F. W. Robertson, of Brighton, says : "*I am more and more sure by experience that the reason for the observance of the Sunday lies deep in the everlasting necessities of human nature. The soul withers without it. It thrives in proportion to the fidelity of the observance.*"

(f) Dr. Ryle, the Bishop of Liverpool, whose weighty words are received with marked approval by so many, says : "*From*

Genesis down to Revelation, I find the day published, republished, endorsed, and sanctioned, and never repealed."

(g) The learned Dr. Horsley affirms that "the use of the Sabbath as it began will end only with the world itself."

(h) The Rev. F. D. Maurice says: "An institution which has lasted for eighteen centuries in the most civilized parts of the universe, which has been preserved amidst all differences of customs, languages, and opinions, races and churches that have been slaying and anathematizing each other, cannot rest upon the doubtful construction of one passage or of twenty."

(i) Mr. Gladstone says: "It seems to me unquestionable that the observance of Sunday rest has taken deep root both in the convictions and the habits of the immense majority of my countrymen. If it appears to many of them a necessity of spiritual and Christian life, others not less numerous defend it with equal energy as a social necessity. The working class is extremely jealous of it, and is opposed not merely to its avowed abolition, but to whatever might indirectly tend to that result. Personally, I have always endeavored, as far as circumstances have allowed, to exercise this privilege; and now, nearly at the end of a laborious public career of nearly fifty-seven years, I attribute in great part to that cause the prolongation of my life and the preservation of the faculties I may still possess. As regards the masses, the question is still more important; it is the popular question *par excellence*."

(j) Lord Beaconsfield, in paying an eloquent tribute to the Sabbath, from his seat in the House of Lords, said: "Of all divine institutions, the most divine is that which secures a day of rest for man. I hold it to be the most valuable blessing ever conceded to man. It is the corner-stone of civilization, and its removal might even affect the health of the people It (the opening of the National Museums on Sunday) is a great change, and those who suppose for a moment that it would be limited to the proposal of the noble baron to open museums will find they are mistaken."

19.—The remedy for many of the mental and physical wrecks found in our asylums, gaols, and poor-houses is a full Sabbath rightly used. The breach of the fourth commandment on the part of the employer loosens the respect of the employee as to all other commandments, and, if his employer causes him to break the fourth, he has but little ground of complaint if the employee replies by breaking the sixth and the eighth. He begets a spirit of lawlessness; the result of which he is sure to feel. This day rightly spent begets energy and cheerfulness. It is the keynote to the whole week. On the working days you get better work, and there is no loss suffered by this weekly rest, but the contrary. This appears to be the universal experience of those who

have spent much time in investigating the results of a broken and a kept seventh day. This is the day which teaches the laborer that he is a man. It is the royal inheritance of those disherited from the wealth of the world.

20.—There are on the statute books of England thirty different laws for furthering Sunday observance, dating from 1448 to 1887; and it is an interesting fact that the laws made by King Alfred the Great were commenced by that noble monarch with the moral law of the Ten Commandments; and to this day the Decalogue forms part of the common law of Great Britain, and, whatever hard names are uttered about these ancient laws, there can be no doubt that they have exerted a great influence in helping to hold up during many centuries that public opinion which still does so much to protect the masses of the people in the enjoyment of the day of rest.

21.—It is clear that this day continued from the Creation to be distinctly observed down to the time of the giving of the Ten Commandments. Before the Ten Commandments were given we have this statement in Exodus xvi. 23: "And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning." See also Genesis vii. 4, 10; viii. 10, 12; i. 10. From these passages it may be conclusively inferred that the seventh portion of time was set apart and hallowed according to God's command up to the period of the giving of the Law.

22.—When the law was given to God's people, specially set apart by Him to receive and preserve it, the fourth was not given as a new command, but His people were reminded thereof, and it was enforced with special reasons for obedience.

23.—This command is found in the "Ten Words" of Mount Sinai. It is not there placed as a mere matter of ceremonial or a passing regulation, but it is found where the whole and lasting duty of man to God and

man to man is found ; and there is therefore no more reason to conclude that this command is at an end than that the law as to obedience to parents, theft, or murder is no longer in force.

24.—If I break the sixth commandment, I shall be hanged ; if I break the eighth commandment, I shall be sent to goal. Why is the breaking of the fourth commandment to go unpunished ?

25.—This is one of the commandments that was written with the finger of God, not like the rules and regulations which may be considered transitory.

26.—The law of the Sabbath was then laid down fully and cogently. Six days of labor were enforced and the seventh was to be a Sabbath for the master, the child, the servant, the cattle, and the stranger. It is for all the inhabitants, and if people come into the land, whether Italian, French, Chinese, Japanese, heathen or infidel, they must conform to this law. (Read carefully Exodus xx. 8-11, and Deuteronomy v. 15.)

27.—This command is surely exceeding broad. A weekly reminder that He is our creator, the Lord of the universe, our Redeemer, and has consequent demands upon us which He is at liberty to enforce.

28.—This, like a thermometer, gauged the nation. When observed, the land was prosperous ; when broken, the people were carried into captivity by compulsion, the land had rest, and national life fell down to zero.

29.—A great mistake is made in concluding that our blessed Lord interfered with the sanctity of the day.

(a) He simply sought to remove the burdens imposed by the Rabbis, whereby the whole spirit and intent of the command was lost.

(b) He cleared away the childish absurdities introduced by the Pharisees—gargling your throat, a work ; nails in your boots, a burden ; and a thousand such like traditions.

(c) In His teaching His command clearly limited the legitimate uses of the day to works of necessity and mercy, and this teaching He emphatically enforced, for, as His custom was, He was found in the synagogue on the seventh day, and when the teaching there was over He was in the midst of the multitude still teaching and healing.

(d) Those who knew the mind and spirit of Jesus, who were with Him and ministered to Him and understood His mind on

these matters, clearly present to us what they understood to be the will of the Lord. (See Luke xxiii. 56.) "And rested the sabbath day according to the commandment," and so on, through the Acts, as they gathered together on the Lord's day and taught and preached and went up and down doing good, to the last book in the Bible—Revelation—where John "was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."

30.—Matthew v. 17, 18. When Jesus says that He is not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil, He does not except this commandment, which is as much a part of the law as anything else therein contained, but says, "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law."

31.—Jesus Himself shows how broad the commandment is, for He says in Mark ii. 27, not that the day was made for the Jew only, but that "the Sabbath was made for MAN."

32.—This day commemorates the greatest event of the world, the resurrection of Christ from the grave (I. Corinthians xv. 12, 20), who is the first fruits of our own resurrection.

33.—It is a standing testimony in favor of the immortality of the soul. (Hebrews iv. 9, 10.)

34.—Where people begin to think lightly of the seventh portion of time and drift from God's day, they drift from God's Word, and from God's house, and from God Himself.

HOW?

1.—If the Lord's day is to be observed, it must be so observed in its entirety. The whole day is to be devoted to God. There is no justification for the stealing of any portion of it. It must be the whole of the Lord's day or none.

2.—If the day be broken into by each at his own time and in his own way, the sanctity of the day is gone, and it is only a question of time when the day will be completely altered and the Lord's day will be devoted to business, pleasure, and vice.

3.—It is clear that the day was not only to be a day of rest, but it was to be holy (Leviticus xxiii. 2, 3; Acts i. 12); the Sabbath day's journey was still to be preserved, and the day was to be spent :

(a) In quietness, rest, and peace.

(b) In reverent and fervent prayer and praise and the study of God's Word.

(c) In an earnest effort to lift fallen humanity nearer to God, as our Master ceased not to do good on the Sabbath.

(d) By resting from all ordinary work, doing only what is absolutely necessary.

(e) By joining others in God's house to worship and praise Him.

(f) By studying and meditating upon His Holy Word.

(g) By holding communion with Him.

(h) By instructing the ignorant in God's Word, and persuading the indifferent of His love and mercy.

(i) By listening to or reading that which would edify a Christian.

(j) By doing any act of mercy or kindness which would merit the Divine approval and cheer or help any fellow-being.

(k) By giving myself to earnest, thoughtful prayer on behalf of that which the Holy Spirit prompts me.

(l) By taking Jesus as my great example in all things.

4.—If the last phase of the devil's attempt to wipe out the Lord's day, the Sunday bicycle, be permitted, then the man with a horse, a carriage, a boat, a fishing-rod or gun, an excursion ticket by water or land, must be equally allowed to invade the day, and the continental Sabbath will rule the land with all that flows from it.

5.—The Christian ought to be above asking what he must *not do* on the Lord's day. He should not think, "What worldly pleasures can I indulge in, how far can I go without risking my reputation as a Christian, by my manner of keeping the Sabbath?" Instead, he should take a higher stand and seek to know "what must I do" to honor Him on this, the one day of the week He claims for His own.

6.—It is the period in which the soul is to be taught how to worship God, and in which an opportunity is given to prepare for the rest above. It is a day not only of rest, but of Holy rest.

7.—Attention may well be called to the class of people who are asking that the Lord's day shall be secularized. A consideration of their position and aims would do much to make people pause before they followed their lead.

8.—It is to be observed that in many cases where there has been a drifting away from the sanctity of this day in the past, there is now a very sincere effort made to get back again into the old paths.

9.—The Lord's day should be kept holy, and especially respected because of the good influence thus had upon others.

10.—All members of all the Christian bodies must uphold the sanctity of the Lord's day, or else hold a general convention and abrogate their standards.

(a) In the Church of England this command forms part of the Book of Common Prayer, and after it has been read by the minister the people solemnly say, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law." And at the close of the commandments, embracing this one, they repeat, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all these, Thy laws, in our hearts, we beseech Thee."

(b) The statement of the Presbyterian Church is equally pronounced, as found in their Confession of Faith. Chap. 21, secs. 7, 8:

"vii. As it is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time to be set apart for the worship of God, so, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, He hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto Him, which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the last day of the week, and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath.

"viii. This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all the day from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations, but also are taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy." (See also the larger Catechism, questions 115 and 120, which further enforces the observance of this day.)

(c) The Church Manual of the Baptists is equally plain. Sec. 15: "We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's day, or Christian Sabbath, and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes by abstaining from all secular labor and sinful recreations, by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public, and by preparation for that rest that remaineth for the people of God."

(d) The Methodist Conference of Canada have made equally clear statements regarding this important subject. The General Conference declares that Sabbath observance "Honors God, elevates our conception of the dignity of man, emphasizes his higher nature and needs, and advances the temporal well-being of human life."

In the spirit of this statement the Conference declared against bicycle riding on Sunday for pleasure, military and society parades, Sabbath funerals, travelling on railways, steamboats, or trams, except in cases of necessity, making the following declaration:

"We view with alarm the persistent and systematic desecration of the Sabbath by railway and steamboat companies, and insist that the rights of conscience and the claims of religion both demand that a united effort be inaugurated by the Christian Churches of our land to enforce the law against these powerful organizations. A continuous and united endeavor on the part of all our ministers and people should be made to create a strong public opinion in this direction, so that the interests of God and His cause may not be made subservient to the interests and claims of business and commerce."

The Conference expressed their gratitude to God for the success attending the opposition to Sunday street cars in the city of Toronto, and their satisfaction in assembling in a city where the Sunday is properly observed.

(c) The Congregational Union declared : " That this Union desires to express its regret at the tendency of city and other railway corporations, as well as private individuals, to encroach upon the sanctity of the Sabbath ; and also to place on record our high appreciation of and sympathy with all efforts to prevent, by all lawful means, its violation."



We are threatened with the forfeiture of this splendid franchise, the annulment of an ancient charter, intended at all times for all mankind ; and it is time that we bestir ourselves. It is sought to bring the matter down to the low level, " Will it pay ? " instead of the only true basis, " Is it right ? "

Much is said about the right of the minority. It is high time that the rights of the majority be considered. Who demands the repeal of this charter ? It comes chiefly from three sources : (a) From greed, money-getters, worshippers of the image of gold, who substitute gain for godliness. (b) Self-interest, pleasure lovers and pleasure seekers. (c) The avowed enemies of our Christian religion, numerically small, but very loud-mouthed. Many of these three classes are prepared to expend money to obtain the complete secularization of the day, in order to increase their gains and their pleasures.

We have attacks made on all hands. Railways—steam and street—steamers, excursions, beer and pleasure gardens, bands, Sunday and large Saturday evening papers, Sunday funerals, parades, theatres, telephones, telegraphs, post offices, discussions on prohibition *pro* and *con*, single tax, secular society meetings, and everything that the mind of man can conceive, to make the Sabbath a work day or a day of entertainment.

Look at St. Louis, Chicago, Los Angeles, etc., and the Continental cities, in order to see to what Sabbath-breaking leads.

The breaking of the fourth commandment, striking at the authority of God, begets especially irreverence ; from this flows a general spirit of rebellion, which ends

in the shaking off of all authority, and breeds anarchy and communism.

Each one may do something in the way of repressing these onward strides of the devil. Let, in our homes, all classes of work and employment be reduced to a minimum. Let every opportunity be given to those in our employment, whether domestic servants or others, to have this day, so far as possible, free to themselves. Let us press for a universal Saturday half-holiday, as a means towards preserving the Lord's day, by giving the opportunity for rest or enjoyment, without infringing on the seventh day. Let us thoughtfully consider that this is God's command, and let us, by example and precept, seek to preserve it. The day is divine, and should be revered. It is beneficent, and made for all ages ; for the whole man, and for all men. In its results it brings with it prosperity and happiness. The public recognition of the Divine Being is something that impresses all people with the reality of our religion.

This appeal is made in the name of the Divine Being, whose mercy gave to all mankind this day as a part of our beneficent heritage. In the name of our loved country, in which we desire to see that righteousness which is not found dissociated from Sabbath observance ; in the name of so many homes, where the only day the father has the companionship of wife and children is the Lord's day ; in the name of our workingmen, who demand that they be not made slaves in working for our enjoyment on God's day, let us arise in our strength and demand for this land and this people a whole Sabbath day free to all in its enjoyment.

"Blest day of God, most calm, most bright,
The first, the best of days,
The laborer's rest, the saint's delight,
The day of prayer and praise.

"This day I must with God appear ;
For, Lord, the day is Thine :
Help me to spend it in Thy fear,
And thus to make it mine."

TORONTO, JUNE, 1896.

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